

Message Text

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64

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195868 TOSEC 200117

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TSPA, US, UR

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM - PROSPECTIVE NASA-SOVIET
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES MEETING (S/S NO.7616903)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM EUR ARMITAGE ACTING THRU
SONNENFELDT (SUBS)

1. THE PROBLEM.

THE SOVIETS HAVE RECENTLY RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO A
1975 NASA PROPOSAL FOR A MEETING OF PRINCIPALS UNDER THE
SPACE AGREEMENT. AFTER CONSULTING WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND
THE NSC, NASA NOW WANTS TO SCHEDULE A MEETING BEGINNING
OCTOBER 19 IN WASHINGTON.

2. BACKGROUND/ANALYSIS.

IN OUR FEBRUARY MEMO ASKING YOU FOR GUIDANCE ON HANDLING
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CERTAIN BILATERAL ISSUES IN THE WAKE OF ANGOLA, WE NOTED

THAT NASA HAD BEEN PRESSING SINCE MAY 1975 FOR A MEETING WITH SOVIET SPACE OFFICIALS IN THE US TO DISCUSS POST-ASTP LARGE-SCALE JOINT SPACE VENTURES. WE DID NOT ANTICIPATE THAT CONCRETE RESULTS OR PUBLICITY WOULD STEM FROM SUCH A MEETING AND YOU APPROVED OUR RECOMMENDATION THAT PLANNING GO FORWARD, ADDING THE PROVISIO "BUT IN THE LOWEST KEY POSSIBLE".

ON JULY 21, SOVIET ACADEMY OF SCIENCES PRESIDENT ALEKSANDROV FINALLY RESPONDED TO THE NASA INITIATIVE. HE PROPOSED THAT THE MEETING TAKE PLACE AT ANY CONVENIENT TIME, POSSIBLY LATE SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER, AND AGREED THAT NASA AGENDA PROPOSALS SHOULD FORM THE BASIS FOR DISCUSSION.

NASA IS PREPARED TO HOST A MEETING OF US AND SOVIET SPACE OFFICIALS BEGINNING ON OCTOBER 19 IN WASHINGTON. THE US SIDE WOULD BE HEADED BY NASA ADMINISTRATOR FLETCHER AND THE SOVIET SIDE BY INTERKOSMOS COUNCIL CHAIRMAN PETROV.

IN A LETTER TO YOU (TAB A) DR. FLETCHER SAYS THAT NO COMMITMENTS FOR MAJOR JOINT PROJECTS WOULD BE MADE AT SUCH A MEETING AND THAT THE FOCUS WOULD BE ON JOINT STUDIES CONDUCTED IN A LOW-KEY ATMOSPHERE.

3. RECOMMENDATION.

WE CONSIDER IT UNLIKELY THAT SUCH A MEETING WILL ATTRACT MUCH PUBLICITY AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH YOUR EARLIER GUIDANCE, WE RECOMMEND THAT NASA BE TOLD TO GO AHEAD WITH PLANS FOR AN OCTOBER 19 MEETING.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

ALTERNATIVELY, THAT WE TELL NASA TO SET THE MEETING FOR NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

4. DRAFTED: EUR/SOV:NBURAKOW; CLEARANCE: C:JMONTGOMERY, CONFIDENTIAL

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OES:RLIIMATAINEN.

5. ATTACHMENT: TAB A - TEXT OF FLETCHER LETTER TO YOU

TAB A -

TEXT OF LETTER FROM FLETCHER TO YOU FOLLOWS:

"DEAR MR. SECRETARY:

IN MAY AND AUGUST OF 1975, WITH THE CONCURRENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATION, WE UNDERTOOK DISCUSSIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE SOVIET UNION LOOKING TO POSSIBLE MAJOR BILATERAL PROJECTS TO FOLLOW THE APOLLO-SOYUZ TEST PROJECT. AFTER SOME DELAY, THE SOVIET SIDE HAS NOW RESPONDED IN AN APPARENTLY FORTHCOMING MANNER, PROPOSING A MEETING ON CERTAIN SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS EARLIER PUT FORWARD BY US. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SUGGESTIONS, AS INDICATED IN THE ATTACHED SOVIET RESPONSE AND THE NASA CORRESPONDENCE WHICH PROMPTED IT, WOULD APPEAR TO REQUIRE JOINT STUDIES RATHER THAN COMMITMENTS AT THIS TIME.

WE HAVE CHECKED WITH YOUR STAFF AS WELL AS THAT OF THE NSC AND HAVE PREPARED AN AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE TO THE SOVIET SIDE. THAT RESPONSE WILL BE TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT IN THE EVENT THAT THERE IS ANY WISH TO RECONSIDER IT AT THIS TIME.

YOU MAY BE ASSURED THAT IN PURSUING THESE DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIET ACADEMY WE WILL CONTINUE TO SAFEGUARD ASSIDUOUSLY THE INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PRESERVE A PROPER BALANCE IN ANY TECHNICAL EXCHANGE WHICH MAY TAKE PLACE. IT IS UNDERSTOOD THAT THE DISCUSSIONS THEMSELVES ARE TO BE TREATED IN LOW KEY SO FAR AS PUBLIC NOTICE IS CONCERNED.

SINCERELY, JAMES C. FLETCHER, ADMINISTRATOR." HABIB

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